Attended school for only 3 years, then left to work because he felt he was not learning anything. Worked in farming and later in lumber camps.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Indian agents on Manitoulin.
- Inadequacy of schooling on the reserves.

Ernest: ...lots of liquor. And then when they got primed up with liquor, a lot of them said, "Well, maybe we should let them come on the island." And then there was a big fight; they separated. These that didn't want to sign, that's Wikki (Wikwemikong) now. And then the ones that wanted to sign the treaty. And they say they were promised $400 twice a year, in the spring and the fall. That's what they were promised.

Tony: For each person?
Ernest: Yeah, for each person. That's $800 a year for each person. But they found out it was only $4. That's what I get, $4 a year. So that's his words. That's what one of the old men told him. But in our treaty research that is part of the history that they've dug up, that there was liquor flowing there at that.... I guess there was liquor at all treaties. (chuckles) Pretty well.

Alfred and Ernest: (Ojibway)

Ernest: I'll try and translate this. He said there was an American that used to come on this island. He says he was always curious about what he saw. Every place he walked, driving around... this was around the First World War, right after the First World War. He said lots of Americans were coming here and spent a lot of money. And he always wondered if the poor people are the Indians. He'd see them walking with a pack on their back or something, and they were curious how come they were so poor.

So one of them came along. He wanted to do research so he hired this Joe Pelletier, we call Joeman. That's Loretta Pelletier's grandfather. So he asked, this American, wherever he was, "Oh, what about all this money we spent here?" "Oh, that goes to Indians, that goes to the Indians." So he came and hired Joe; he was going to find out more. "We'll go to the reserve and ask the Indians." So the first place they went was Sagamok and they found this old Shawnee Nodawin (sp?), the South Wind. He was crawling on his hands and knees weeding his garden in his bare feet. And he says, "What are you doing?" "Well, I have to depend on this garden to do me for the whole year." "How much do you make?" this American asked him. "Does the government give you any money?" "Oh, yes." Well, that's what he's been told. "How much do you get?" "$4." "Is that per day?" "No, for one year." (all laugh) So, that's the story.

Alfred: That's good story, eh?

Tony: Yeah.

Ernest: I've heard that said by different people. They claim they changed the zeros on that.

Tony: Yeah.

Ernest: But somehow, even four hundred in 1862 would have been a tremendous amount of money. It wouldn't have been...

Tony: It wouldn't have been per person.

Ernest: So I don't think that would be...

Tony: Four hundred dollars in the 1860s.
Ernest: And twice a year, eight hundred dollars. I don't think it....

Tony: Eight hundred dollars would be something like $30,000 a year now.

Ernest: I don't think that's - but one thing, the interpretation supposedly of the Robinson Treaty is - this $4 a year was only a down payment or part payment. We're supposed to get a percentage of everything that comes out of the ground. That's how they're interpreting it now. That's what the promise was. To share in everything that was taken out of the ground and the forests. But this $4 was merely a part payment. That's they way they're interpreting it now, anyway.

Christine: Were they promised other things besides the $4? Gifts or goods or whatever?

Ernest: I think this is how this $4 came about by what I understand now. Because in order to keep them on their side militarily, they gave them presents every year. But that came to quite an expense to ship everything from England and then canoe it up here and get the Indians together. They figured just the monetary payment would suffice. I heard this is the reason for this payment. It was costing. And I remember reading a story where Assiginack, after he was converted and swore off liquor, that when they came here for this treaty distribution in 1836, these Indians would come from all over the States. Even Winnebagos, Menominees came here. And they'd have these pots and pans and rifles and according to their status. But there would be these unscrupulous traders from Detroit who would waylay them with liquor. But there was one.... It's in that little book, I think, where one guy from Michigan was stationed around the bay to catch these canoes going out. But Assiginack was told. He went with a party and dumped off, dumped all his liquor into the water. I believe it's in that book. It could be like that movie we saw last night. Maybe the department was working with the bootleggers. In all probability. (chuckles)

Tony: It wouldn't be surprising, would it?

Christine: Maybe Alfred knows what we were talking about the other day, about whether people ever had to have permits to move? You know, we were asking the other day whether that ever happened here?

Ernest: That's a good question.

Alfred and Ernest: (Ojibway)

Ernest: They would ask the Mounties then, eh, or the government? Who would they ask?

Christine and Tony: The Indian agent issued the permit.
Ernest: Indian agent.

Alfred and Ernest: (Ojibway)

Tony: Just to go off the reserve.

Ernest: Just to go off the reserve.

Alfred: (Ojibway)

Ernest: No, it never happened here. This was...

Alfred: No it never happened, no, no.

Ernest: So this shows you it was a western... because of the rebellion.

Tony: Probably because of the rebellion, yes.

Alfred: (Ojibway)

Ernest: He says at one time it was very hard for anybody to cross the border. Like, the Indians had as much trouble as the white man because maybe they weren't told that they made treaty possibly. But he tells me about two people here from Wikwemikong, Jim Wakegijig.

Alfred: Yeah.

Ernest: Dick Kamawo and Joe Wekanay.

Alfred: Yeah, yeah.

Ernest: I remember him. I was in the hospital with Jim.

Alfred: Yeah.

Ernest: Jim, Jim, old Jim.

Alfred: He's that lame fellow.

Ernest: Yeah. So, they went across and they just mingled with everybody and got across the same way. But they were arrested because the immigration could tell by their clothes, by the way it was sewn or somehow. The Americans could tell just by their clothing. And they got one month.

Alfred: Yeah.

Tony: In jail?

Ernest: In jail. But see, there is a lot of things weren't covering that we were punished for and we were never told to take our fishing. We never knew that... they used to seize our nets. We didn't know that we hadn't signed away our fishing rights in northern Ontario until Gus uncovered it. So, you
were never told a lot of the conditions of these treaties. They just lied to you. Then we're just uncovering and reading what's in there and then we're using our interpretation. That was another theme of the meeting in the treaty unit meeting in Toronto, was we want interpreted. We also want to renegotiate these treaties where we think they're unjust.

Tony: Yes.

Ernest: And to show the fact that you can renegotiate, we've amended this James Bay Treaty six times already since it was made. So there is an example there that you can amend them. But this is going to be a big fight at the table with Trudeau because the treaties are going to be brought up this time.

Christine: (Inaudible)

Ernest: (Ojibway) The time they had the 100 year celebration... Andrew Paul was one of the first big fighters for Indians and I remember I was just a kid. They asked him what is the most serious question in Canada regardless of what, economic, political. "The Indian question," he says. That's what he said. That was years ago and I still remember because there is lands that they're sitting on top of. We don't know. We've asked for geological surveys. We've gotten results on some but will they tell us exactly what. Oh, they give us a report but how do we know it's true? We may be sitting on a diamond cache or a gold... but these are the underlying things that we don't know. I've heard somebody... this is just a guy I run into in a bar in Toronto, an old prospector. And he was telling me... I don't know whether he was a dreamer or just giving me a line... an old guy. And he talked about what I'm saying now. He's up around the Manitoba, Ontario... that area around there. Thunder Bay someplace. He says there are diamonds there because of the tremendous pressure that was exacted by the glacier. That some big diamond outfit bought a diamond off an Indian without ever revealing the source and they've been sitting on this. They've been waiting to get Indian land before they tell the truth. That's what he told me one time. I don't know whether... but he was a prospector, this old guy.

Tony: Yes.

Ernest: So we don't know because the decisions made by politicians are by pressure usually from the financial interests.

Tony: Yeah.

Ernest: So how do they know. This is just a wild supposition, but you never know. You don't know what's behind all these things.

Tony: Alfred, what was life like here when you had the Indian agent here? When you were farming? How was it different from
today?

Alfred: (Ojibway)

Ernest: He doesn't find any difference. Well, I guess Alfred, one reason too... (Ojibway). Alfred was a kind of a... oh, he wants to tell about one.

Alfred: (Ojibway)

Ernest: There was one they called Bob Lewis was very rude, you know. He'd just go after you without even you starting anything; he'd go after you. And this Ross Johnson was a quiet, easy-going man. He was a farmer outside of Manitouaning that got that job. I know he was very quiet and easy going. But I know he screwed us out of some land. That Treasure Island deal, you know. That Treasure Island we saw? It cuts off part of that island. He sold it without permission.

Tony: When was that?

Ernest: Oh, that was in the fifties, or the forties. And that'll be part of our fight. And this big lake, the one big lake now. (Ojibway) The Indians reserved that for sugar bush. But this Wag Company got ahold of it through the crooked deal. That's when Ross Johnson was there I think. And we lost that.

Alfred: Yeah.

Ernest: Wag, he was a big Liberal supporter and he acquired that land. You know who lived there for a while and lived really good? (Ojibway)

Alfred: Yeah, oh yeah.

Ernest: We visited there a couple of times and, boy, he had everything there. Fish and great groves of hardwood maple. That's when the Indians still made maple sugar. And I remember visiting Ogawa, (Ojibway). And we just lost it. And then the rules stated, an Act says, you cannot sell land without the permission of the... there has got to be a referendum. And yet they did that. They pulled this two or three times on us here. And this Ross Johnson was involved. So Wag had a big creamery and he used a big furnace and he used four, thirty inch wood. Then he hired Indians to cut that twenty-four inch hardwood for his furnace at almost starvation wages. Then after he pretty well cleaned that out and then he subdivided it for lots, a beautiful area around the lake. And then I think he sold the Wag Company. So since the war we've been asking questions and

I think they've been very nervous. This Farquar clan are very influential politically. Their father was for years a member of parliament for their riding and then he became a senator. That's when they vacated that seat for Lester Pearson, to make it a safe seat. That's why he came here. And his son became
the party whip in the provincial house, Stan Farquar. So they're very - this Wag and this family - they're socially prominent. They dine with the higher-ups in Ottawa and they're acceptable in that strata so if we make some kind of an investigation it's going to pull a lot of the dirty laundry out in the open. And I think they're terrified of that. Even some people that I know that are connected to the party, some Indians, I don't think they... because they don't want to see their party hurt. But I think, it's that party that hurt us, that was in power when they pulled this on us. I've always said why worry about their feelings and their standing in society, the hell with them. If they hurt us, why didn't they think of our feelings? Why worry about their feelings now?

Tony: No.

Ernest: This is just my...

Christine: I just wanted to ask Alfred if he had gone to school?

Alfred: (Ojibway)

Ernest: Oh, three years he...

Alfred: (Ojibway)

Ernest: (chuckles) All he learned was catechism for three years, religious.

Christine: Where was that? What school was that?

Alfred: (Ojibway)

Ernest: (Interpretation) He says he went...(Ojibway). Well, we got three Indian names now, three priests. (Ojibway) Yeah, they were just known by that. Some old people, they don't even know their real name they just...(Ojibway). (chuckles) That wasn't much different from my generation.

He says all they were taught was catechism, not even figures. And the only thing aside from catechism, you draw some boat, picture of a boat or horses, you know. So that just goes along with that story Johnny Manitowabi told me that Father Desautel confided to his grandfather. They had orders not to teach Indians, and I brought that up. It's official government policy not to educate Indians.

Tony: What else, I mean, you went to school for a whole day at a time. Was it residential school?

Ernest: No, this was, oh, I better finish this story. He said the school burnt. So they started building a new school. And that's the church's money, most likely subsidized. But the men were paid a dollar a day and the young fellows were getting
paid a dollar. But then they hired teams of horses and they were paying about the same rate as the lumber camps, said. But one fellow wanted more money, eh.

Alfred: Yeah

(Ojibway)

Ernest: Joe Wetonkin wanted more money. So they had a fight finally and this Father Belanger, I remember him. And they were arguing with Indians. He could talk Indian just like anybody. And so finally he lost his temper. Oh, the Indians told him, "This is our reserve. Why don't you get off." So they moved to Spanish and built that residential school. That's the first time I knew that was the cause of it. But there used to be a residential school.

Tony: So this was a residential school...

Christine: That burned down?

Alfred and Ernest: (Ojibway)

Christine: Was the school that Alfred went to a day school or was it....?

Alfred and Ernest: (Ojibway)

Ernest: No, day school.

Tony: If all these....

(Ojibway)

Ernest: Oh, he was telling me, one of these old fellows, John Roy, (Ojibway).

Alfred: Yeah.

Ernest: This man, he was a good carpenter. He worked for years until he retired in Little Current, John Roy. He was from here. And he was telling John not too long ago... and he was very smart. There was a couple he mentioned, very smart. So, they were too smart. So he only went half a day and they had him picking up stones off a farm the Jesuits owned. And his dad come along and saw that. "What are you doing here? You're supposed to be in school." "Well, the priest sent me here." "Well, we got a farm here that needs the stones taken off." So they had to go through the Indian agent in order to remove from the school. He made them. He got his son out of there. I know John, he's still.... (Ojibway) John? He about your age?

Alfred: Oh, he must be 80.

Ernest: Yeah, I see him around, walking around Little Current there. So this farm, where was the farm? Do they still own
Alfred: No, no. (Ojibway)

Ernest: From who did he buy it from?
Alfred: (Ojibway)

Ernest: (chuckles) He bought it from the priests.
Alfred: Yeah.

Ernest: Even West Bay, they've been trying to ask for some kind of a deed or... I don't think it was ever arranged. Just stay there and nobody will say anything. I don't think there was any. That would be an interesting something to investigate. See what status that land in West Bay.

Tony: If all they did was to teach them catechism and to draw, what else did they have to do through the day? What else did you do?
Alfred: (Ojibway)

Ernest: Oh, they played soccer outside.
Alfred: Yeah.

Ernest: There was a lot of soccer played then.
Christine and Tony: Yeah.
Alfred: (Ojibway)

Ernest: He says he can read a letter if it's written to him. But he taught himself figures, you know, figuring. He taught himself that because it wasn't taught to him.
Alfred: Yeah.

Christine: Was there a reason that he left after only such a short time at school? Why he didn't go longer?
Ernest: I think the school burnt.
Christine: Oh, that was the....
Ernest and Alfred: (Ojibway)

Ernest: He told his dad that, "I'm not learning anything so I might as well not go." You know, that's reminiscent of my brother, the one that's down in Kingston; that's the one that lost his leg. My dad subscribed to Toronto Star and we had a radio. He was pretty well off. And the teacher we had didn't know anything. She was just an old maid that was sent there, the same thing. Or just catechism and a little bit of figuring and reading, that's about it. And my brother just came home one
time, "I'm not going back. I'm not learning. I know more than the teacher." Because we were reading the Toronto Star every day and the radio. We actually knew more than she did. And we still didn't know anything.

The first organizational meeting we had in Garden River, the very first resolution we passed, non-denominational education. I remember that because I was one of the... I don't know if I made the motion or not. And I gave a little talk about my brother and I used my brother as an example. Now he's got a leg off and he used to work driving a truck, in manual labor. Now he can't do that. If he'd gone to school he could have maybe used just his brain. But now he hasn't got that. I brought that out, too.

The next resolution was to bring back all our people that had enfranchised if they put their money back. They would never accept that. Because, we said, these people that have been out, they're the ones that could come and help us. That was our reasoning. So, all this is true. You could just hear a litany of this if you travel from reserve to reserve, from older generations.

Tony: Yeah. When you went to school, did they make you work at all during the day or did they just let you play soccer and play?

Alfred and Ernest: (Ojibway)

Ernest: No, he didn't.

Alfred: (Ojibway)

Ernest: His dad taught him how to work then.

Alfred: (Ojibway)

Ernest: He says his Dad told him how to make a living then. He says there's a barn here that he made with just squaring logs. It's still here, he says. And he got to know more about farming than his own dad because he took such an interest. But one thing I'm confused, he says he went to this residential school, that burned out thing they have there, for a little while, but the priest evicted him. But you walked there... but then that's when he told his dad that he wasn't learning anything. But I can't, when did they... that was a residential school then. But when did they close that?

Alfred: Oh, 1915? (Ojibway) It was gone, very quick.

(Ojibway)

Ernest: Oh, he says the sisters came but they seemed to be apart from the Jesuits and they taught at a school down the hill. And they seemed to teach more. He says his brother learned quite a bit there in a short time.
Tony: What did he do after he left? How old was he when that school was over?

(Ojibway)

Ernest: Twelve years old.

Tony: What did he do then?

Ernest: Fourteen.

Alfred: Fourteen.

Ernest: Well, that's when he said his father taught him how to work. His father cut tie blocks out in South Bay all winter and then he took over, like, the household. He fed the animals, the cattle, the sheep, cut wood. And from them on he started working. That used to be the big thing, tie blocks for railroads.

Alfred and Ernest: (Ojibway)

Alfred: Cedar, birch, and balsam, and cedar and birch, and black ash.

Alfred: (Ojibway) Ten miles wide and forty miles long, on the Indian Reserve. (Ojibway)

Ernest: This was a...

(Ojibway)

Ernest: And they say there was wonderful forest there but it burned, 1916.

Alfred: 1916, 1915, the First War.

Ernest: They say great big cedar, everything, the hardwood, but it burned.

(Ojibway)

Ernest: He says those ties were eight feet long. I thought they were only four feet on the railroad. Maybe, I guess that's one way of gypping them, eh.

(Ojibway)

Ernest: (chuckles) Maybe they were eight feet, I don't remember now. I worked on the railroad gang for a little while but I don't remember.

(Ojibway)

Ernest: I couldn't find the notebook this morning when we talked with Dan Pine. I thought I'd get some ideas there but
if we could look.....

(End of Side A)

(End of Interview)

PROPER NAME INDEX

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROPER NAME</th>
<th>IH NUMBER</th>
<th>DOC NAME</th>
<th>DISC #</th>
<th>PAGE #</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ASSIGINAK</td>
<td>IH-OM.04A</td>
<td>MISHIBINIJI2</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>3,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JOHNSON, ROSS (INDIAN AGENT)</td>
<td>IH-OM.04A</td>
<td>MISHIBINIJI2</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEWIS, R. (INDIAN AGENT)</td>
<td>IH-OM.04A</td>
<td>MISHIBINIJI2</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

INDEX

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDEX TERM</th>
<th>IH NUMBER</th>
<th>DOC NAME</th>
<th>DISC #</th>
<th>PAGE #</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AGRICULTURE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-farming</td>
<td>IH-OM.04A</td>
<td>MISHIBINIJI2</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>12,13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDUCATION</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-and child labor</td>
<td>IH-OM.04A</td>
<td>MISHIBINIJI2</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDUCATION</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-attitudes toward</td>
<td>IH-OM.04A</td>
<td>MISHIBINIJI2</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>8-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDUCATION</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-day schools</td>
<td>IH-OM.04A</td>
<td>MISHIBINIJI2</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>8,9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDUCATION</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-residential schools</td>
<td>IH-OM.04A</td>
<td>MISHIBINIJI2</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INDIAN AFFAIRS, DEPARTMENT OF</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Indian agents</td>
<td>IH-OM.04A</td>
<td>MISHIBINIJI2</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAND</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-loss of</td>
<td>IH-OM.04A</td>
<td>MISHIBINIJI2</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>7,8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MISSIONARIES</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-attitudes toward</td>
<td>IH-OM.04A</td>
<td>MISHIBINIJI2</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NON-INDIANS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-duplicity of</td>
<td>IH-OM.04A</td>
<td>MISHIBINIJI2</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TREATY, ROBINSON</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-interpretation of</td>
<td>IH-OM.04A</td>
<td>MISHIBINIJI2</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>2,3,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TREATY, ROBINSON</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-payment of treaty money</td>
<td>IH-OM.04A</td>
<td>MISHIBINIJI2</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>3,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WORK</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-for wages</td>
<td>IH-OM.04A</td>
<td>MISHIBINIJI2</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>12,13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>